

# Baltic States and Finland

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## Summary

This article presents a survey of the First World War in the region of today's states of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. Chronologically the article begins with the outbreak of the war in August 1914 and ends with the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Peace Treaty in Riga on 18 March 1921. The article covers the historical background of the region as well as a survey of the course of war and its effects on the civilian population, particularly displacement. Moreover, it outlines the policies of the German occupation regime against the background of German perceptions of the region. Taking into account that fighting in the region continued for two more years after the German defeat, special focus is placed on the transition from imperial war to the "independence wars", starting from the Russian Revolution and ending with the successful establishment of national states.

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## Introduction

The Baltics and Finland were not a main theatre of World War I. They did, however, play a significant role as a powerful projection screen for annexations and a German-dominated post-war order, as the German military [occupied the Baltics](#) over the course of the war and

gained significant influence in Finland. Moreover, the Baltics and Finland represented the only larger region (apart from [Poland](#)) of the western periphery of the [Russian Empire](#), in which the course of the war in 1918–1920 allowed independent states to emerge and consolidate.

## The Region

Up to 1917, the Baltics and Finland were constitutionally parts of the Russian Empire, with Finland being a Grand Duchy with significant autonomous rights and the Baltics an integral part of the [Empire](#). While the regions of the Baltics were occupied by the German army at different points of time during the war, Finland remained far from the front and, due to its autonomous rights, virtually did not participate in the war.

Before World War I, the notion of the “Baltic States” did not exist. Today’s Latvia and Estonia were roughly congruent with the so-called “Baltic provinces” of Courland, Livonia and Estland, and a small part of Vitebsk province. Most of modern Lithuania formed the north-westernmost part of the so-called Northwest territory. The Lithuanian-speaking population was dominant in the governorate of Kovno and formed majorities in the northern parts of the governorates of Vilna and Suwałki, the latter of which was part of the Kingdom of Poland. The coastal area around the city of Memel (today Klaipėda) formed the north-easternmost tip of East Prussia.<sup>1</sup>

The region was disparate regarding its economic development. While Finland had witnessed a modest process of lumber-related industrialization while in general retaining a rural character, the Baltic provinces with their port cities, Riga, Libau and Tallinn (the most important ports of the Empire), were more urbanized (although this holds less true for the hinterlands). Lithuania, however, remained rural, with Vilnius and Kaunas retaining their modest economic significance as trade cities. As the whole region formed the periphery of the Empire, it was linked economically by [railroad](#) and trade to St. Petersburg and Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

The social composition of the region was disparate, too. In Lithuania, like in most parts of the Empire, serfdom was abolished only in 1861, which had led to a belated formation of a Lithuanian-speaking intelligentsia originating mainly from the peasantry. In Courland, Livonia and Estonia, however, serfdom had been abolished as early as 1816–1819, leading to an earlier process of social stratification of the peasant population and thus to deeper ruptures between them and the dominant Baltic German gentry than those between peasants and the Polish speaking nobility in Lithuania.<sup>3</sup> In Finland, where serfdom had never existed, the Swedish-speaking nobility early on championed rights for the majority Finnish-speakers, but retained cultural and social distinctiveness.<sup>4</sup> In the whole region, the figure of landless

peasants was extremely high.<sup>5</sup>

## Course of the War (1914-1918)

Due to its position at the border with East Prussia, Lithuania was lined with strong fortifications, and hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.<sup>6</sup> Correspondingly, units of the Russian 1<sup>st</sup> Army, the staff of which was based in Vilnius, began the invasion of East Prussia from Suwałki and Kovno governorates on 2 August 1914, forcing the First German Army Corps to retreat. At the end of August, the region around Memel (Klaipėda) and Tilsit (today Sovetsk) was under Russian occupation. After the [battle of Tannenberg](#), however, the German army advanced into Suwałki governorate towards the river Nieman (Nemunas, Memel), but was pushed out again in November. The front subsequently stabilized, and only after the Second Battle of Masuren in February 1915 did the German army again advance beyond imperial borders.

In an attempt to minimize the benefits gained from the areas occupied by the Germans during their push towards Western Lithuania and Courland, the retreating Russian troops destroyed much of the crops and existing infrastructure. Libau was occupied on 7 May, allowing the German 8<sup>th</sup> Army ("*Njemenarmee*") to advance deep into Courland, taking Jelgava and Bausk on 1 August.

From there, the 8<sup>th</sup> Army moved into Northern Lithuania, taking Russia's most modern fortress, Kovno (Kaunas), on 18 August.<sup>7</sup> Wilno, which hosted the headquarters of the military district, was occupied on 19 September. The Russian army began its retreat along the entire front. Heavy fighting occurred around and in Dvinsk (Daugavpils) for the remaining months of 1915 and early 1916, but in summer 1916 the Russian army managed to stabilize the front along the river Dvina (Daugava) at the border of Courland and Livonia, with the Germans managing to capture neither Dvinsk nor Riga. At this point of time, roughly the governorates of Suwałki, Kovno, Vilna and Courland were under German occupation.

Finland was not only separated from the theatre of war by the Gulf of Finland, but also acted as a [neutral](#) country. No systematic conscription took place, and the Grand Duchy itself had no armed forces. However, during the war, being theoretically open to German invasion, Finland was also put in a state of defence due to its proximity to Petrograd. Most of the Russian Baltic fleet was transferred to Helsinki; the garrison was increased to 50,000 men.<sup>8</sup>

In summer 1917, after the [February Revolution in Russia](#), the front along the Dvina started moving again. German forces took Riga on 3 September and occupied several islands off the

Estonian coast. Following the October Revolution and disarray within the Russian army, the German army took Tallinn on 24 February 1918. Only a few days later, on 3 March, the [Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk](#) was signed, putting military actions to a halt in the region until the armistice of 11 November.

## Making Sense of the War

Reactions to the outbreak of the war in the Baltics were very different from those in Finland. Among Baltic Germans, who feared hostilities against anything German in the Russian Empire, and among Russian Jews, expectations were pessimistic; however, particularly parts of the Russian-oriented rabbinic Litvaks publicly supported the war, hoping that a patriotic stance might help them gain legal equality.<sup>9</sup> In Finland, a pro-German attitude prevailed among intellectuals hoping that a defeat of Russia would significantly improve the chances of Finnish independence, while the economic elite supported Russia.<sup>10</sup> Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian elite groups overwhelmingly expressed solidarity with the Tsarist regime due to allegedly aggressive minority policies of the German Empire and expectations of a quick victory.<sup>11</sup> The war was mainly regarded as a conflict between the Russian and the German Empires. Among the large diasporas, however, the war was expected to decide over the “national” future of the small nations, and concrete ideas for independent states were discussed.<sup>12</sup> At first, among Lithuanian intellectuals, such ideas gained ground once the Russian Army was driven out of East Prussia. The evacuations and destruction wreaked by the hands of Tsarist soldiers in the course of their retreat made their return seem unlikely. This changed only with the Russian counter attacks in autumn 1916 and the stabilization of the front at Dvinsk and Riga.<sup>13</sup>

Socialists and social democrats in the Baltics overwhelmingly opposed the war, stating that the Baltic Sea region should not be a focus region for the struggle between the [imperialist](#) powers. As Finland did not directly participate in the war, Finnish socialists could avoid the dilemma of having to decide for or against patriotism. Despite their contempt for Tsarist rule, social democrats in the Baltics did not support a German victory either, as [German social democracy](#) had, in their eyes, discredited itself by their agreement to [Burgfrieden](#) and the Peace Interpellation (*Friedensinterpellation*), which was perceived as an approval for annexations.<sup>14</sup> The anti-German stance increased after the February Revolution in Russia, which made a democratic Russian federation seem the most attractive option for the realization of national forms of social democracy – not only for political, but also for economic reasons.<sup>15</sup>

## War Experience

As along most of the [Eastern front](#), the Baltic front was characterized by comparatively quick front movements, although territorial gains were made much more slowly than initially expected. [Russian military planning](#) intended to exploit the economy of the west of the Russian Empire fully for [warfare](#) in order to protect the inner regions from effects of the war.<sup>16</sup>

After the onset of mobilization on 29 July 1914, large numbers of locals were conscripted, most of whom were peasants.<sup>17</sup> Many, however, did not show up for military service in order not to abandon their farms.<sup>18</sup> Due to the Tsarist policy of employing soldiers in regions far from their home, relatively few local peasants fought in the Baltics; however, many were included in units of the National Guard, and were thus employed close to their homes.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, many soldiers drafted in the Vilna Military District were included in the 1<sup>st</sup> Army and thus fought in East Prussia.<sup>20</sup>

With the introduction of [martial law](#), civilians in the Baltics could be drafted for work by the Russian authorities, mainly in connection with the construction of fortifications and trenches.<sup>21</sup> While the military economy created jobs particularly in the fortress cities, unemployment among farm labourers and artisans rose significantly.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, peasants were barred from moving into the cities to prevent starvation.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, civilians were warned not to hoard food or sell it overpriced, and were severely fined if they did.<sup>24</sup>

At the beginning of the war, newspapers immediately told peasants near the Russo-German border to stay where they were (even in the event of a retreat by the Russian army), and to abstain from any kind of resistance to requisitions. Civilians were to maintain secrecy regarding movements of the Russian army and to refrain from spreading rumours.<sup>25</sup> Peasants were urged to till their fields and reap the harvests as usual. The regional administration tried to compensate families for the loss of breadwinners and to keep the rural economy intact by urging villagers to avoid drinking, arguing, pillaging and rioting and by exploiting everyone's working capacity as efficiently as possible.<sup>26</sup>

These good intentions, however, were severely hampered by the requisition policy of the Russian army, which aimed at ensuring the nutrition of soldiers,<sup>27</sup> but subjected civilians to a feeling of lawlessness. In spite of efforts by the Supreme Command of the Army to contain the worst excesses,<sup>28</sup> it ordered crops and harvests as well as houses and agricultural

buildings to be destroyed as the German advance began.<sup>29</sup>

Starting in 1915, the new means of warfare began to have an effect on the regions far from the front, too, as German airships bombed Vilnius and larger industrial cities and railway centres such as Dvinsk and Šiauliai, but also smaller towns.<sup>30</sup> Inexperience with unexploded ordnance led to several fatal accidents as peasants tried to open bombs.<sup>31</sup> After German troops began using [poison gas](#) in trench warfare in the beginning of 1915, rumours spread in Lithuania that Germans were planning to bomb towns on the Baltic front with gas.<sup>32</sup> Strategically important towns such as Šiauliai, Tauragė, Memel (Klaipėda) and Kaunas suffered particularly heavily during the war.<sup>33</sup>

When the Russian army began its retreat in 1915, many towns and villages were for hours or even days without any of the authorities that could ensure public order, thus leaving civilians in a state of anxiety.<sup>34</sup> The Russian administration had urged civilians to elect provisional administrations from their midst, to forestall robbery and pillaging, which became serious problems.<sup>35</sup> Most severely affected by the retreat of the Russian army were the [Jews in Lithuania and Courland](#). Due to the closeness of the Yiddish language to German, they were scapegoated for the quick defeat of the Russian army. Any correspondence in Yiddish was prohibited. This preconception built on a very negative image of Jews, which was prevalent in the Russian Empire.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Jews were suspected of evading military service and their numbers accordingly recorded on separate lists.<sup>37</sup>

The advance of the German army was accompanied by rumours about violent excesses. Towns were plundered and several villages burnt down by German soldiers in 1915.<sup>38</sup> Numerous inhabitants were shot under the suspicion of [espionage](#). With the advance into Courland, the treatment of the civilian population became worse due to the strained relations and social antagonism between Baltic Germans and Latvian peasants, the latter of which were suspected of supporting scattered Russian military units and escaped [prisoners of war](#) (POWs). Along the coast, a ten kilometre-wide strip was cleared of all civilians and a manhunt for alleged spies undertaken. The appearance of German-speaking soldiers in Courland and later in Livonia and Estonia was perceived more negatively by the civilian population than in Lithuania, where particularly Prussian soldiers of Lithuanian origin (*Lietuvinkai*) seem to have had a calming effect on the Lithuanian civilian population.<sup>39</sup>

In July 1915, Latvian [national regiments](#) ("Riflemen" – *Strēlnieki*) were formed.<sup>40</sup> They

defended the front along the river Daugava successfully, but suffered immense losses.<sup>41</sup> Estonian units were formed only after the February Revolution in April 1917 and were restricted to one regiment of 8,000 men.<sup>42</sup> No Lithuanian national units were formed. From Finland, nearly 2,000 volunteers went to [Germany](#) in 1914 to receive military training and form the so-called "[Jäger-Battalion](#)". This led to a halt of conscription in Finland due to doubts regarding Finnish loyalty.<sup>43</sup> However, a significant number of Finns, who had been soldiers already before the war, and numerous volunteers, fought in the ranks of the Russian army.<sup>44</sup>

The regions behind the front also suffered from the war. When the front stabilized along the river Daugava, large cities such as Dvinsk and Riga became front cities and were almost totally abandoned by civilians due to the incessant shelling and gas attacks on both sides.<sup>45</sup> Bad hygiene conditions led to a sharp increase in the death rate in Riga.<sup>46</sup> Livonia was flooded by refugees seeking employment.<sup>47</sup> In Finland, the situation was less dramatic, although the war prevented trade with Finland's most important economic partners, the German Empire and [Great Britain](#). As Finland did not witness any fighting and switched its exports exclusively to the Russian inner market, the economy boomed, because the metallurgic industry supplied the factories around St. Petersburg. However, strong inflation caused Finnish wages to drop significantly. The closing of the Baltic Sea cut the country off from its main trading partners Germany and Great Britain, and White Russia became increasingly unable to supply Finland with food. Consumption of wheat per head dropped by 80 percent, of rye by 65 percent and of potatoes by 13 percent between 1915 and 1917 – a development which became one of the main causes for the outbreak of the Revolution in Finland.<sup>48</sup>

## Evacuation, Exile and Prisoners of War

Both the Tsarist administration and the German occupation regime tried to restrict the movement of civilians, which made it difficult to travel even short distances. However, in cases of evacuation, the same civilians were forced to embark on journeys of often many thousands of miles.<sup>49</sup> In late summer 1915, all men from eighteen to forty-five years of age were told to retreat with the army, and resisters were unreservedly abducted.<sup>50</sup> Most of the larger cities were evacuated. Civilians suspected of sympathizing with the Germans were deported: this mainly affected civilians in the occupied areas of East Prussia<sup>51</sup> and Russian Jews. During the German advance towards Courland and Kaunas, the Russian army evicted Jews and Germans from the north and east of Lithuania,<sup>52</sup> and Baltic Germans from Courland and Livonia.<sup>53</sup> To render these evacuations legally possible, the Pale of Settlement, which had



restricted Jewish residency to the western periphery for more than 100 years, was disbanded.<sup>54</sup> Evicted persons were given from three to twenty-four hours to pack what they could carry and leave.<sup>55</sup> In hastily evacuated Kaunas, merely a quarter of the pre-war population remained when the Germans entered the city.<sup>56</sup> In Vilna, the situation became chaotic as 200,000 civilians awaited evacuation, while at the same time the streets were flooded with [refugees](#). In Courland governorate, only two-thirds of the population remained when the German army moved in.<sup>57</sup> Abandoned houses were frequently plundered or occupied by squatters.<sup>58</sup> The German military administration tried to regulate the use of abandoned buildings.<sup>59</sup> Only some of the deportees returned to their homes after the war. Particularly among Jews, the “evacuations” led to a long-term decrease in their share of the population in the region.<sup>60</sup> The evacuation of factories effectively de-industrialized the region.<sup>61</sup> When Riga, including its industrial plants, was evacuated, 96,000 workers were forced to retreat with the army.<sup>62</sup> The Livonian industry was also evacuated in anticipation of a further German advance.

Evacuees received hardly any support. Some refugees found shelter in abandoned (mostly Jewish) houses; most, however, stayed in camps, exposed to disease and hunger.<sup>63</sup> As the front stabilized in 1915, evacuees had to get used to the thought that they would remain far from home for a long time, which in some cases led to a sense of alienation, thus strengthening nationalistic positions among them. The repatriation, which commenced after the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty in 1918, posed a challenge for the emerging new states, and was partially used as a tool to advance ethnic homogenization of the nation state.<sup>64</sup>

## Structure of Occupation

In contrast to Poland, the occupied areas in the Baltics remained under a military administration, which was almost exclusively composed of military personnel of [Paul von Hindenburg's \(1847-1934\)](#) 10<sup>th</sup> Army and shaped decisively by [Erich Ludendorff \(1865-1937\)](#).<sup>65</sup> The aims of the *Oberbefehlshaber der gesamten deutschen Streitkräfte im Osten* (*Ober Ost*) were on the one hand the exploitation of the occupied territories and on the other hand their long-term annexation to the German Empire.

The *Ober Ost* officials' knowledge of the Baltics was extremely limited.<sup>66</sup> When trying to win over one group, Ludendorff often offended another. Following the Act of 5 November 1916,



the *Ober Ost* administration began to favour Lithuanian nationalists over Poles in order to establish a counterweight to the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>67</sup> The utilization of Jews as intermediaries in turn led to [anti-Semitic](#) allegations of collaboration.<sup>68</sup> Among German officials, a negative attitude prevailed towards the local population, which was considered culturally backwards, politically immature, and unwilling to work.<sup>69</sup> This led to the introduction of laws demanding the submissive behaviour of the local population, which in turn was perceived as humiliating. In Courland (and later in Livonia and Estonia), the inclusion of Baltic Germans into the occupational administration furthered hostile feelings in the population.<sup>70</sup>

The Administrative Statute of 26 June 1916 divided *Ober Ost* into six districts (Courland, Litauen, Wilna, Suwalki, Bialystok, Grodno), which in 1917 were merged into three units (Courland, Litauen, Bialystok-Grodno) comprising ca. 3,000,000 inhabitants. The districts' most significant military governors were [Alfred von Goßler \(1867-1946\)](#) (Courland, and after 1 August 1918, also Livonia and Estonia), [Franz-Joseph von Isenburg-Birstein \(1869-1939\)](#) (Litauen, until 12 January 1918) and [Theodor von Heppe \(1870-1954\)](#) (Bialystok-Grodno, since 12 January 1918 Litauen), who were subordinated to Ludendorff, who acted as head of administration with dictatorial powers in Kaunas, and was subordinate only to the Emperor.<sup>71</sup> In the territories occupied in 1918, *Ober Ost* re-established the pre-Petrine administrative institutions dominated by Baltic Germans and systematically destroyed the administration established by the Bolsheviks.<sup>72</sup>

The cultural policies of the Germans were coined by their self-conception as *Kulturträger*, and the concept of *Ober Ost* as a project of "German cultural work in the East".<sup>73</sup> At the same time, they included as a *divide-et-impera* policy along ethnic lines, the favouring of Lithuanians over Poles, and of Baltic Germans over Latvians and Estonians. While the teaching of Polish and Belarusian was allowed, the use of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian languages in school was specifically encouraged. A large number of liberal or even leftist German artists and novelists (many of whom were Jewish) served in the *Ober Ost* staff, frequently reporting on the specificities of the local – particularly the Jewish – population.<sup>74</sup>

## Civil Life under the Occupation and Economy of Exploitation

As German military officials had significantly less knowledge of the Baltics than of Poland, they at first refrained from too much interference in public life and instead focused on the persecution of scattered Russian units and the registration of livestock. The occupation was

hence among civilians initially perceived to be less strict than Tsarist rule.<sup>75</sup> Food transportation was limited to accommodate food requirements within the German army. Liquor sale, however, prohibited by the Russian military administration, was permitted.<sup>76</sup> As the effects of the Russian evacuation policy became felt, with [food](#) becoming short<sup>77</sup> and the economy suffering from the destruction of agricultural and industrial premises, *Ober Ost* turned towards stronger regulation. At the end of 1916, ration cards were introduced, all crops confiscated and any food trade prohibited: this led to severe salt shortage.<sup>78</sup> Starvation, however, remained rare, the exceptions being in Vilnius, Courland and Riga, where the food situation worsened in spring 1918.<sup>79</sup> The *Ober Ost* administration increasingly controlled civil life and the whole economy. The founding of associations was prohibited;<sup>80</sup> responsibility for schooling, however, was left in the hands of the local population.<sup>81</sup> On 24 January 1916, the "Ost-Rubel" (succeeded by the "Ost-Mark") was introduced and expanded to the areas occupied in 1917 and 1918.<sup>82</sup> Continuing economic stagnation led to growing dissatisfaction among civilians.<sup>83</sup>

The increasingly arbitrary requisition practice led to growing discontent particularly in the rural regions. In summer 1916, German punitive expeditions violently cracked down on peasant resisters in west Kovno governorate, burning down buildings used to illegally store goods. Even for short trips in the immediate vicinity, peasants had to obtain travel permits – a practice further aggravated by the arbitrary drawing of administrative district borders.<sup>84</sup>

Small tsarist partisan units that remained in the areas of occupation further aggravated the situation of the civilian population. They stayed in contact with the Russian military high command until summer 1916, carried out several successful military actions against the occupants, recruited among the Latvian and Lithuanian peasantry and were in some cases supported with food by local peasants. Partisan units, which in some cases attacked and robbed Jews, were termed *Banden* ("gangs") by the military administration and persecuted and in many cases shot along with civilians suspected of assisting them.<sup>85</sup>

Trade was monopolized within the "*Abteilung für Handel und Rohstoffe*" ("Department for Trade and Resources"), and the financial sector within the "*Darlehnskasse Ost*" ("Savings Bank East"), a part of the Prussian Ostbank. As local producers were forced to accept the plummeting "Ost-Mark" for their products and Russian currencies, the military administration managed to generate enormous profit. Infrastructure projects were only conducted if they served the military industry.<sup>86</sup>

In November 1916, [forced labour](#) was introduced as a systematic policy, drawing relatively little criticism from German politicians due to a negative [stereotype](#) of allegedly work-shy Lithuanians and Latvians. Due to the ambitious economic plans of the administration, only few workers were sent to Germany, while most were kept for labour in Lithuania and Courland. Forced labourers were also brought from the [General Governorate of Warsaw](#), several of whom managed to escape together with local workers. Some of these refugees joined groups of Russian soldiers hiding in the forests.<sup>87</sup>

The formation of “Work Battalions” (*Arbeitsbataillone*) led to a significant deterioration of relations between the military administration and civilians,<sup>88</sup> as peasant families in particular could not compensate for the loss of their providers.<sup>89</sup> Rather than discussing other economic strategies, the *Ober Ost* administration clung to the principle of force. This improved only with the establishment of a Lithuanian National Council (*Lietuvos Taryba*) in late 1917, when measures to make labour more attractive were discussed. The efficient and ruthless exploitation of resources and labour found a positive echo among most political camps in the German Empire and had a significant influence on the policies of forced labour introduced in the east during the Second World War.<sup>90</sup>

## Annexation Plans and German Concepts of a Post-War Order

The region of the future Baltic States played a significant role in the annexation plans of German politicians, military top brass and conservative intellectuals. Due to its early occupation and its conception by Ludendorff as being his personal military state,<sup>91</sup> the whole region of *Ober Ost* became a possible area for German colonization, ostensibly as a continuation of the centuries-long history of German settlement in the east (*Ostsiedlung*). In particular, Courland, which, unlike Lithuania, had a long history of Baltic German economic, political and cultural dominance, served as a projection screen for German annexation fantasies, as the forced evacuation of Latvians left large areas unpopulated and increased the share of German speakers.<sup>92</sup> A radically pro-annexionist report by agronomics professor [Max Sering \(1857-1939\)](#);<sup>93</sup> a popular image of the eastern Baltic region as vast and undeveloped;<sup>94</sup> and propaganda by the “Baltic Trust Council” (*Baltischer Vertrauensrat*) established by Baltic German émigrés, furthered annexation plans. As a consequence, no other occupied area was visited by so many delegations of noblemen, parliamentarians, ministers, government officials and journalists from the German Empire.<sup>95</sup> Nonetheless, colonization and annexationist ideas were again taken up after the treaty of Brest-Litovsk and

the overthrow of [Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg \(1856-1921\)](#), as German military leaders sought to establish puppet regimes in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland. These plans became obsolete when the chancellorship was taken over by [Max von Baden \(1867-1929\)](#), who abstained from any active interference in the region;<sup>96</sup> and finally by German defeat in the west. The idea of a German colonization of the Baltics, however, survived until well after the collapse of the German Empire, as plenipotentiary to the Baltic Lands, [August Winnig \(1878-1956\)](#), envisioned a Baltic state ranging from West Prussia to Latvia and the idea of settling at the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea became a motivation for volunteers to join [Freikorps](#).<sup>97</sup> Moreover, this concept had a significant influence on German colonization plans in World War II.<sup>98</sup>

German annexation plans had become particularly unattractive for the local elites after the collapse of the Tsarist order and the prospects of a democratic Russia.<sup>99</sup> Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian nationalists, who initially had put cautious hope in cooperation with the Germans, now came to regard autonomy within a democratic Russia as preferable to incorporation into the German Empire. The Russian [Provisional Government](#), however, while supporting Finnish statehood, because of its constitution and apparent willingness to consider Lithuanian and Ukrainian demands, met Latvian and Estonian demands for autonomy with surprise and reluctance.<sup>100</sup> While it finally agreed to unify the governorates of Estonia and the north of Livonia into one Estonian province on 30 March 1917,<sup>101</sup> it never conceded the same to Latvia, partially because the region of Latgale had, for more than a century, been part of Vitebsk governorate.<sup>102</sup>

The Baltics also had a strong significance for debates on a post-war Poland. The idea of re-establishing Poland in its pre-partition borders, which included Lithuania and Courland, was powerful among some groups of Polish political activists and intellectuals. Even among activists who favoured a smaller Poland, the inclusion of at least the Vilnius region was integral – a claim which became a major bone of contention in the interwar period.<sup>103</sup>

## The Russian Revolution and Brest-Litovsk

The years 1917 and 1918 were decisive for the emergence of independent states in the region discussed, as demands for autonomy gained momentum and quickly evolved into claims for independence. The Russian Revolution facilitated the creation of autonomous state structures in Estonia and the complete secession of Finland, which had not yet been occupied by the German army. The establishment of a democratic Russia in turn forced Germany to develop plans for concessions of independence to Lithuania. The Revolution caused relatively

little violence in Estonia;<sup>104</sup> however, its suppression in Finland caused major bloodshed.<sup>105</sup> In Estonia, the Revolution was consolidated soon after a general strike on 14 March, and the refusal of the 100,000 soldiers stationed there to shoot at revolutionaries.<sup>106</sup>

In Finland, revolutionary activity only started in the middle of March, after the Provisional Government in St. Petersburg had granted the restoration of the Finnish constitution on 6 March 1917. The plans for independence made by the Social Democrats, who enjoyed an absolute majority in the Finnish parliament, and were backed by the Bolsheviks, soon gave way to conflict with [Aleksandr Kerenskii \(1881-1970\)](#) government, which sent more troops into Finland and dissolved the parliament 18 July 1917.

In spring 1917, Latvian nationalists formulated the idea of independence as a long-term goal.<sup>107</sup> Estland was united with the northern part of Livonia governorate into an autonomous Estonian governorate in February 1917;<sup>108</sup> and in May 1917, a provisional assembly (*Maapäev*) was elected.

The power vacuum in Finland and the sharp antagonism between Bolshevik-backed Social Democrats and the Conservatives escalated into a violent [civil war](#) after the Bolshevik coup in Russia, the Finnish general strike of 14-19 November 1917, and the declaration of independence on 6 December 1917. The Red Guards controlled the urbanized south of Finland and the White Guards (*Sojeluskunsta*) the north. A decisive factor for the victory of the White Guards was the intervention of a German expedition corps under the command of [Rüdiger von der Goltz \(1865-1946\)](#), landing in Finland 3 April 1918.<sup>109</sup> The Bolsheviks gained the greatest support of all regions of the Empire among Latvians in Livonia, due to the lack of other leftist movements and the social antagonism with the Baltic Germans. The *Iskolat* (Executive Committee of the Soviets of Deputies of the Workers, Soldiers and Landless Peasants of Latvia) came to power, proclaiming Soviet Latvia on 18 December 1917.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, the Latvian "Riflemen" (*Strēlnieki*) under Colonel [Jukums Vaciētis \(1873-1938\)](#) became the backbone of the [Red Army](#), securing Bolshevik power in Russia, after German troops occupied the north of Latvia in February 1918.<sup>111</sup> Estonian activists used the commotions caused by civil war and the approaching German Army to declare independence on 14 February 1918 and disarm Bolshevik units. The [paramilitary Omakaitse](#) ("Home Guard") shot a large number of people suspected of sympathizing with the Bolsheviks.<sup>112</sup>

The Russian Provisional Government and particularly the Bolsheviks accepted stronger autonomy rights at the former imperial periphery. On the territory of *Ober Ost*, it thus became necessary to prevent a shift of orientation among Lithuanian activists towards

Russia. The military administration thus allowed the assembly of a conference in Vilnius on 18-22 September 1917, which elected the twenty-four-men-strong Lithuanian Council (Taryba), designed to lead the country towards independence.<sup>113</sup> The massive territorial gains made by the German army during the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk brought the whole of the Baltics under occupation, and Finland under German influence, again boosting annexation plans. Both Finland and Lithuania were to be made into kingdoms with monarchs of German descent at their heads.<sup>114</sup> These schemes were made obsolete by the defeat of Germany in November 1918.

## German Retreat and Independence Wars (1918-1921)

While the German *Ostseedivision* under the command of Rüdiger von der Goltz was shipped back from Finland to Germany in December 1918, a multitude of old and new actors began to struggle for power in the Baltics, with alliances shifting quickly. On a larger scale, two wars were fought. In the context of the Russian Civil War, the Bolsheviks aimed at consolidating power and at the same time expand their borders to export the Revolution. At first, the Red Army fought the White Armies and *Freikorps* ("free corps"), who sought to re-establish imperial order or followed individual, more obscure agendas.<sup>115</sup> On their push westwards, the Bolsheviks increasingly came into conflict with the Polish army, which aimed at defining the eastern border of the new Polish state – a conflict that escalated into the nearly two-years-long [Polish-Soviet War](#). Along the frontlines, new state formations and armies with national agendas strived for consolidation, ultimately pushing back both the White Armies and the Red Army.

The armistice of 11 November 1918 demanded that German troops stay in the region to defend it against Bolsheviks. However, with the German army in a state of dissolution as soldier councils and High Command struggled for power, the latter decided to recruit volunteers for so-called *Freikorps*, which were to assist the newly forming national armies. These included the [Baltische Landeswehr](#) ("Baltic Land Defence"), which was made up mainly of Baltic Germans and Russians and fought chiefly in Latvia; the *Eiserne Division* ("Iron Division"); and the *Deutsche Legion* ("German Legion"), both of which joined the Russian Western Volunteer Army in early autumn 1919. The *Freikorps*, which entered into conflict with the new national armies as often as they co-operated with them, were put under the supreme command of General Rüdiger von der Goltz and numbered altogether between 20,000 and 40,000 soldiers.<sup>116</sup>

The strongest Latvian national units – the Riflemen, who were founded in 1915 and numbered 24,000 soldiers in autumn 1918<sup>117</sup> – remained loyal to the Bolsheviks. An opposing Latvian



National Army (*Latvijas Bruņotie spēki*) was founded as late as July 1919, with substantial help from Estonians, Germans and the Entente. In May 1919, the Lithuanian Army (*Lietuvos kariuomenė*) numbered 10,000 soldiers and the Estonian People's Army (*Eesti Rahvavägi*), which could draw from small national units formed after the February Revolution, 74,500 soldiers.<sup>118</sup> The latter was initially highly dependent on the *Baltenregiment* ("Baltic Regiment"), which was formed by Baltic German organizations, but remained subordinate to the Estonian Supreme Commander<sup>119</sup> and numbered 700-800 soldiers.<sup>120</sup> The Finnish White Guards and the 2,000 soldiers of the Jäger-Battalion formed the core of the Finnish army. Anti-Communist and Bolshevik forces in Finland fluctuated between 50,000-90,000 soldiers each.<sup>121</sup> Officers of these newly formed armies had mostly served in the Russian Imperial Army, while the rank and file were recruited from the local peasantry and often had no military experience.

On the Bolsheviks' side, the most important military organizations were the Red Army; the Army of Soviet Latvia (formed in January 1919 from the Latvian Riflemen and the International Division), which occupied most of Latvia by the end of 1918; and the 5,000-men-strong Bolshevik Estonian Riflemen (*Eestimaa Punaarmee*) (later formed into the Estonian Red Army).<sup>122</sup> The short-lived Lithuanian-Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (LitBel) did not command its own army.<sup>123</sup> The most important White Armies were the North West Army (up to 17,000 men)<sup>124</sup> in Estonia and Northern Russia, and the West-Russian Volunteer Army (maximum 40,000 soldiers)<sup>125</sup> in western Latvia and Lithuania, the politics of which were mostly determined by their commanders [Nikolay Yudenich \(1862-1933\)](#) and [Pavel Bermond-Avalov \(1859-1943\)](#), who did not coordinate their strategies.

Great Britain sent a squadron of warships into Baltic ports, attempting to block the Baltic Sea from Bolshevik ships, and supported the Estonian army and the White Northwestern Army. The newly established Polish army was present at two fronts in the region, successfully fighting alongside the Latvian National Army against the Red Army in Latgale in winter 1919-1920 and against the Lithuanian army in September/October 1920 in the Suwałki region, eventually occupying the Vilnius district.

Between 1918 and 1921, the war bore characteristics of a coalition war, secessionist war, civil war, ethnic conflict and warlordism. Groups of common identities or ethnicities were fighting on both sides. Lithuanian-speaking civilians encountered Lithuanian-speaking soldiers from East Prussia,<sup>126</sup> and Jewish soldiers were fighting in both armies.<sup>127</sup> During the "[independence wars](#)", most of the combatant groups were ethnically highly mixed – even the



newly established “national” armies.<sup>128</sup> Soldiers of Latvian origin fought against one another in the struggle between [Kārlis Ulmanis \(1877-1942\)](#) and German-backed [Andrievs Niedra \(1871-1942\)](#). Moreover, “national” armies did not limit themselves to actions on the territories of their states. After the consolidation of Finnish *de facto* independence, Finnish volunteers participated as soldiers in Finnish military expeditions and as insurgents in campaigns to “liberate” other peoples perceived as “Finnish” from Russian rule (*Heimosodat* – “Wars of kindred nations”, 1918 – 1920), ultimately being defeated by the Bolsheviks in East Karelia and North Ingria. However, Finnish volunteers successfully helped push back the Bolsheviks from Tallinn in December 1918.<sup>129</sup> The Estonian army fought in northern Latvia, and the Latvian National Army pushed into Lithuanian territory while pursuing the West Russian Volunteer Army in late 1919.<sup>130</sup>

Both social democracy and Bolshevism gained most support among Latvians, as more Latvians fought in the ranks of the pro-Bolshevik “Riflemen”<sup>131</sup> than in the “national” army and Vaciētis became Chief Commander of the Red Army, but numerous soldiers of Estonian and Lithuanian origin fought in the Red Army, too.<sup>132</sup> The Bolshevik’s promise of a radical land reform was attractive to many peasants, and the “national” armies gained wide support among peasants in summer 1919, when they promised substantial stretches of land to soldiers. German and White units gained little support among peasants, as they could not offer them land, which they in fact were trying to defend for themselves.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, Ulmanis’ offer of land was a decisive incentive for German volunteers to join *Freikorps*.<sup>134</sup>

The different powers and political groups ascribed very different meanings to the Baltics. The Bolsheviks regarded it as a window to the west due to its Baltic Sea ports and as a bridge for taking the revolution to Germany. The White Movement regarded it as a gateway to St. Petersburg. The German troops, still clinging to a vision of German domination in the Baltics, regarded the region as a vacuum which could be filled by anyone quick enough to seize it. These conceptions, however, carelessly ignored the dynamics and military power unfolded by proponents of national states in the region, who managed to persevere as the dust settled.

On 22 November 1918, the Red Army, including the Latvian Riflemen, started an offensive on Estonia and Latvia. An alliance of the Estonian army, the *Baltenregiment*, Finnish Volunteers and the “Kuperjanov Partisans” managed to halt the offensive, thus giving the Yudenich time to organize the North Western Army. The Latvian Riflemen, however, quickly occupied most of Latvia until 2 January 1919 and established a Latvian Socialist Republic, while a “national” government headed by Kārlis Ulmanis held out in the port city of Liepāja, which he had to

share with an ever-increasing amount of *Freikorps* soldiers. Ultimately, on 16 April, the *Baltische Landeswehr* removed him from office in a coup d'état and took Riga on 22 May. This German-Latvian antagonism, however, provoked a joint Estonian-Latvian manoeuvre against the *Landeswehr*, culminating in the [Battle of Cēsis](#), which ended with a defeat of the *Freikorps* 23 June 1919.<sup>135</sup> Five days later, the signing of the [Treaty of Versailles](#) required Germany to remove its forces from the Baltics, thus restoring the Ulmanis regime on 3 July.

Further south, the Red Army moved through Belarus towards Lithuania, taking Vilnius on 5 January 1919, pushing out the Polish "Self-Defence of Lithuania and Belarus" (*Samoobrona Litwy i Białorusi*) and thus turning a Polish-Soviet border conflict into open war. After moving into Lithuania, the Bolsheviks declared the short-lived Lithuanian-Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (LitBel) on 26 February. Further west, however, the Red Army met successful resistance by joint Lithuanian and *Freikorps* forces. Only the occupation of Vilnius by the Polish Army in April, however, allowed Lithuanian and German troops to concentrate on a shorter front and push the Red Army beyond the river Daugava until August 1919.

On 28 September 1919, Yudenich's North Western Army marched towards St. Petersburg, but was defeated by the Red Army. On its way back, it was disarmed by the Estonian army, as the Estonian government had already taken up peace negotiations with the Bolsheviks. Bermond-Avalov's Westrusian Volunteer Army, on the other hand, which served as a holding centre for the majority of *Freikorps* members and for former [Russian POWs](#), turned into a real threat, less for the Bolsheviks than for the Latvian and Lithuanian governments, both of which had rejected active support of a campaign against Moscow or St. Petersburg. However, Rüdiger von der Goltz, the de facto commander of the Westrusian Volunteer Army, which had occupied western Latvia as well as northwestern Lithuania in autumn 1919, was recalled to Germany. The army was successfully attacked by Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians and dissolved. Its soldiers were transported to East Prussia and Bermond-Avalov fled to [Denmark](#).

The demise of the White Armies in the Baltics brought decisive relief to the national states of Estonia and Latvia who now could concentrate on defending their eastern borders. Estonia signed a peace treaty with Soviet Russia on 2 February 1919 (Treaty of Tartu). The south of the Baltics, however, remained a war zone as the Polish-Soviet War escalated further. As Polish troops advanced into Latgale in October 1919, they were joined by Latvian troops, who managed to occupy Daugavpils in winter 1919/20. Although the Polish and the Lithuanian army had previously fought successfully hand in hand against the Red Army, in July 1919 Poland launched an offensive against Lithuania and tried – unsuccessfully – to unseat the Lithuanian government in August/September 1919.

Relieved of its White enemy, the Bolsheviks pushed back the Polish army in the first half of 1920, with the Lithuanian Army occupying those towns left by the Poles. On 14 July, the Red Army took Vilnius, and five days later, Grodno. In spite of the peace treaties between the Soviets and Lithuania (12 July) and Latvia (11 August), both states remained under threat as the Red Army remained on the territory officially ceded to them.<sup>136</sup> The power of the Bolsheviks in the Baltics and in the whole of East Central Europe increased significantly until they were surprisingly defeated in a battle at the gates of Warsaw, 12 to 25 August. While Polish troops were pushing back the Bolsheviks, they reclaimed the territories occupied by Lithuanian soldiers (including Vilnius, which had been handed over to Lithuania by the Bolsheviks one day after the Battle of Warsaw). On 22 September, the Polish army attacked Lithuanian forces in the Suwałki region, mostly to facilitate the pursuit of the Soviet forces across the river Nieman (Nemunas, Memel). Although the [League of Nations](#) negotiated a ceasefire and a demarcation line on 7 October, Polish general Lucjan Żeligowski, in a professed coup, occupied Vilnius, thus initiating a cold war, which would paralyze the Lithuanian interwar state and poison interwar Polish-Lithuanian relations.

However, conflicts also arose between the newly established states themselves. Estonian troops moving through Livonia towards Cēsis and continuing the practice of food requisitions, were regarded by many Latvians as occupants.<sup>137</sup> In October 1920, clashes nearly broke out between Latvian and Lithuanian forces over the town of Ilūkste, which at that point of time was occupied by Lithuanians.<sup>138</sup> Nonetheless, by October 1920, the territories of the new national states Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were consolidated. Poland and Bolshevik Russia took up peace negotiations in September, signing armistice ratifications in Liepāja and a formal [peace treaty on 18 March 1921 in Riga](#).

As the Red Army occupied parts of Estonia and Latvia after the November Armistice, particularly estate owners and priests were subjected to terrorization, which increased as the military situation of the Bolsheviks worsened.<sup>139</sup> However, as violence in the war zones of East Central Europe escalated in the course of 1919, all military actors resorted to terrorization tactics, a development attributed to the fact that the armies were still in the process of formation and incorporated highly diverse units of paramilitary character, the members of which defined themselves politically, nationally or socially.<sup>140</sup>

*Freikorps* soldiers killed thousands of civilians who were suspected of co-operation with Bolsheviks in their onslaught on Riga in May 1919.<sup>141</sup> Claiming Courland and northern Lithuania for colonization, the *Freikorps* also exerted terror against soldiers of the new national armies, whom they perceived as competitors. Infuriated, they burnt and pillaged

villages even during their withdrawal to Germany in summer 1919.<sup>142</sup>

The new national armies included paramilitary units, which either emulated existing White terror units<sup>143</sup> or were created as a direct reaction to paramilitary violence on the enemy side.<sup>144</sup> In several cases, these also resorted to terror measures. In Estonia, for instance, several terroristic revenge acts were conducted against alleged sympathizers of the Bolsheviks in winter 1918/19, which were at least tolerated by the government headed by [Konstantin Päts \(1874-1956\)](#). Only when the Social Democrats left the government out of protest did Päts order the containment of violence.<sup>145</sup>

Particularly at the forefront of the [Polish-Soviet War](#) in the Baltics, Jews became frequent victims of terror. The Jewish civilian population was subjected to acts of violence when Vilnius was briefly taken by the Polish army in January 1919, but particularly after the city's occupation on 19 April. Polish soldiers killed up to sixty Jews in Vilnius, legitimizing the violence by alleging that they had collaborated with the Bolsheviks.<sup>146</sup> Moreover, both Belarusian and Lithuanian inhabitants of Vilnius complained that they were subjected to terror, repression and violence.<sup>147</sup>

## Establishment of National States

The path to constitutionalized statehood differed for all four states regarding the activists involved, and the time and context of their formation. Both Finland (6 December 1917) and Estonia (14 February 1918) declared independence in the context of the Russian Revolution and the [Civil War](#). However, in Finland independence was proclaimed by the long-existing parliament (*Eduskunta*), while in Estonia it was declared by the Provincial Assembly (*Maapäev*), which had come into being in the course of the revolution. In German-occupied Lithuania, independence was declared against the background of the negotiations in Brest-Litovsk on 16 February 1918 by the Lithuanian Council (*Lietuvos Taryba*), which had been formed at the Vilnius Conference (18-23 September 1917). In Latvia, independence was declared after German capitulation on 18 November 1918 by the People's Council (*Tautas padome*) which had convened only one day earlier. These councils appointed constituent assemblies (in Finland it was appointed by the parliament) which drafted constitutions that were passed in Finland on 17 July 1919, in Estonia on 21 December 1920, in Lithuania on 6 August 1922 (revoking the provisional constitution of 10 June 1920) and in Latvia on 7 November 1922, thus constituting the states as democratic republics. The national councils and provisional governments were dominated by [Antanas Smetona \(1874-1944\)](#), Kārlis Ulmanis and Konstantin Päts,<sup>148</sup> who would remain influential through the interwar period,

later establishing authoritarian regimes in Lithuania (1926), Latvia (1934) and Estonia (1934).

Externally, the phase of consolidation of the four states began with a series of peace treaties negotiated with Soviet Russia, which fixed their eastern borders – Estonia's on 2 February 1920 (Tartu), Lithuania's on 12 July 1920 (Moscow), Latvia's on 11 August 1920 (Riga) and Finland's on 14 October 1920 (Tartu). Lithuania concluded a border treaty with Poland on 7 October 1920 (Suwałki Agreement), which was violated by the Polish occupation of Vilnius only two days later, thus making Lithuania the only country in the region with unresolved border issues – a problem that would put it in a significantly weaker position than the other Baltic states for the whole interwar period.

The peace treaties consolidated these states not only from a territorial perspective, but also on a diplomatic level, as they meant *de jure* recognition by Soviet Russia (Finland had already been recognized *de jure* by the Bolsheviks on 4 January 1918). This was more difficult in the case of the Entente. Due to its special autonomous status within the Russian Empire and the fact that its independence had already been accepted by the Kerenski government, Finland was recognized *de jure* by the members of the Entente even before the end of the [Peace Conference in Paris](#).<sup>149</sup> Although the context of the emergence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as independent states was very different, with Estonia having emerged in the context of the Revolution (and thus already recognized *de facto* by France in March 1918 in order to strengthen it against Germany),<sup>150</sup> and Lithuania under German occupation. All three states faced the same problems of attaining *de jure* recognition, as Great Britain and particularly the [United States](#) refused put the territorial integrity of Russia at risk before the Civil War was decided.<sup>151</sup> The three states were thus fully recognized *de jure* jointly by all Entente members in 1922, when the persistence of the Bolsheviks could no longer be ignored and most territorial issues settled. The League of Nations decided to admit Finland on 16 December 1920 and the Baltic States on 22 September 1921.

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## Notes

1. The governorates of Livonia and Estonia and parts of Finland had been annexed to Russia after the Great Northern War in 1721, while Courland governorate and the whole of Lithuania were annexed in the course of the Third Partition of Poland in 1795. The remaining parts of Finland were taken from Sweden after the Finnish War (1808–1809) and unified with the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1812. ↑
2. The railway networks connected the Baltic ports to St. Petersburg and Moscow and to

facilitate troop movement into the border regions. Even autonomous Finland traded 30 percent of its imports and exports with Russia on the eve of World War I. Hjerpe, R.: Finland's foreign trade and trade policy in the 20th century, in: *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 18/1 (1993), pp. 56-76; Oberländer, Theodor: *Die landwirtschaftlichen Grundlagen des Landes Litauen*, Langensalza 1930. ↑

3. Hroch, Miroslav: *Die Vorkämpfer der nationalen Bewegung bei den kleinen Völkern Europas: Eine vergleichende Analyse zur gesellschaftlichen Schichtung der patriotischen Gruppen*. Prague 1968; Loit, Aleksander, *Die nationalen Bewegungen im Baltikum während des 19. Jahrhunderts in vergleichender Perspektive*, in: Loit, Alexander (ed.), *National Movements in the Baltic Countries during the 19th Century. The 7th Conference on Baltic Studies in Scandinavia*, Stockholm, June 10-13 1983, Uppsala 1985, pp. 59-81 ↑
4. Raun, Tovi U.: *Estonia and the Estonians*, Stanford 1984. ↑
5. In Lithuania, landless peasants accounted for as much as 30 percent of the rural population, in Finland for 43 percent and in Estonia for even 60 percent. Hunt, Mabel G.: *List of Publications of the United States Department of Agriculture from January 1926, to December 1930*, Chicago 1932, p. 264; Minnik, Taavi: *Der Teufelskreis der Gewalt. Terror und Repression in Estland 1917-1919*, in: *Forschungen zur baltischen Geschichte* volume 6 (2011), pp. 120-140, here p. 123; Tyla, Antanas: *1905 metų revoliucija Lietuvos kaime* [The 1905 Revolution in the Lithuanian village], Vilnius 1968, p. 41. ↑
6. The 20th Army Corps was stationed in the larger Vilna Military District (Vilenskiy voennyj okrug), which comprised not only Lithuania, but also Courland, parts of Livonia and large parts of today's Belarus. ↑
7. The fortress of Kovno was also among the largest (together with the fortresses around Warsaw, Modlin and Brest) in the Empire. ↑
8. Upton, Anthony F.: *The Finnish Revolution 1917-18*, Ann Arbor 1981, p. 15f. ↑
9. Schuster, Frank M.: *Zwischen allen Fronten. Osteuropäische Juden während des Ersten Weltkrieges (1914-1919)*, Cologne 2004, p. 117. ↑
10. Upton, *Finnish Revolution* 1981, pp. 15-16. ↑
11. Balkelis, Tomas: *The Making of Modern Lithuania*, London 2009, p. 105; Bleiere, Daina: *History of Latvia. The 20th century*, Riga 2006, p. 75ff.; Page, Stanley W.: *The Formation of the Baltic States: A Study of the Effects of Great Power Politics upon the Emergence of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia*. New York 1970. ↑
12. For the Lithuanian case cf. Šliupas, J.: *Europos kare ir mes* [The European war and us], in: *Laisvoji mintis* 51 (1914), pp. 1203-1205. For the Latvian case cf. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, pp. 75ff. ↑
13. Lithuanian intellectuals had expressed their support of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the war, but received no response from Russian Prime Minister Ivan



Goremykin (1839-1917). Angered, the Lithuanians were thus the first to look westwards, adapting Russian war aims, but for the ends of a Lithuanian autonomy, or, according to the influential lawyer Martynas Yčas, for an independent Lithuanian state, which thus became imaginable significantly earlier than a Latvian or Estonian state. Latvians and Estonians rather demanded a division of Livonia governorate and the attachment of the respective parts to Courland or Estonia. Pikčilingis, J.: Pergyventos valandos [Survived hours], in: Karo archyvas, 3 (1926), pp. 90-111, here p. 106; Von Rauch, Georg: The Baltic States. The Years of Independence. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, 1917-1940, Berkeley 1987, pp. 24ff.; Strazhas, Abba: Deutsche Ostpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg. Der Fall Ober Ost 1915-1917, Wiesbaden 1993, p. 66. ↑

14. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 76; Upton, Finnish Revolution 1981, pp. 15ff.; Weiss, Fritz: Die Baltische Frage im Weltkrieg und in der Russischen Revolution, Bern 1917, pp. 11-15. ↑
15. For the Latvian case cf. Weiss, Baltische Frage 1917, pp. 15, 22-23, 28-31, 41-43. For the Lithuanian case cf. Mitrulevičius, Gintaras: Socialdemokratų politinės nuostatos bei veikla Lietuvoje Vokietijos okupacijos metu. 1915 m. ruduo-1917 m. pirmoji pusė [The political positions and activities of the Social Democrats in Lithuania under German occupation. Autumn 1915 to the first half of 1917], in: Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 2/2002, Vilnius 2004, pp. 121-146. ↑
16. Hatlie, Mark R.: Riga und der Erste Weltkrieg. Eine Exkursion, in: Tauber, Joachim (ed.): Über den Weltkrieg hinaus: Kriegserfahrungen in Ostmitteleuropa 1914-1921, Lüneburg 2009, pp. 13-33, here pp. 14-16. ↑
17. In Latvia alone, 120,000-140,000 men were mobilized. In Estonia, nearly 10 percent of the population – in total 100,000 men – were conscripted into the Russian Army, and 75 percent of them came from rural areas. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 77; Raun, Estonia 1971, pp. 94ff. ↑
18. See, for example, for numerous cases in Kovno district: Kauno apygardos archyvas (Kaunas District Archive) = KAA, f. I-59, ap. 1, b. 123, l. 12-272. ↑
19. The thirteen home guard companies stationed at Daugavgrīva, for instance, were almost entirely made up of Latvians. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 77. ↑
20. On 15 February 1915, the 20th Corps, which mainly consisted of Latvians, enabled the 1st Army to retreat near Augustów, but was in the process completely destroyed, leaving 20,000 Latvian soldiers dead, making this the military operation with the highest number of dead Latvian soldiers of the whole war. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 78. ↑
21. Pikčilingis, Pergyventos valandos [Survived hours] 1926, p. 95; Weeks, Theodore S.: Vilnius in World War I, 1914-1920, in: Tauber (ed.), Weltkrieg 2009, pp. 34-57, here p. 40. ↑
22. In summer 1915, roughly 50 percent of the 35,000 landless peasants of Šiauliai districts were unemployed. Lietuvos ūkininkas, 17 June 1915, p. 180. ↑

23. Lietuvos ūkininkas 31, 13 August 1914, pp. 294-295. [↑](#)
24. Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas (Lithuanian Historical State Archives) = LVIA, f. 1058, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 26, 43. [↑](#)
25. Russian officials closely observed the mood of the population, particularly in the beginning of 1915, as the German Army began to gain the upper hand. For the case of the districts Kalvaria and Mariampol (both Suwałki governorate) cf. the reports of the respective Chiefs of Staff (Voinskie Načal'niki): LVIA, f. 496, ap. 1, b. 27, l. 21-24, 29-35. [↑](#)
26. Cf. for the case of Suwałki governorate LVIA f. 1027, ap. 3, d. 43, l. 49, 60, 79, 131; Patarimai karo metu [Advice for the times of war], in: Lietuvos ūkininkas 31, 13 August 1914, pp. 294-295. [↑](#)
27. Cf. e.g. the guidelines issued by the Suwałki governor Kuprejanov to the district chief of Wyłkowiszki regarding the practice of paid and unpaid requisitions from 1 July 1914: LVIA f. 1027, ap. 1, b. 11, l. 1-1 a.p. [↑](#)
28. LVIA f. 1027, ap. 1, b. 11, l. 2; b. 15, l. 19-22; Paaiškinimas del įsakymo Vyriausiojo Vado [Explanation of the order of the Supreme Commander], in: Lietuvos ūkininkas 25, 22 July 1915, p. 224. [↑](#)
29. Priedite, Aija: Latvian Refugees and the Latvian Nation State during and after World War One, in: Gatrell, Peter/Baron, Nick (eds.), Homelands: War, population and statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia 1918-1924, London 2004, pp. 35-53, here p. 37. [↑](#)
30. Weeks, Vilnius 2009, p. 40; Toronto World, 12 October 1915, p. 1; Karas Lietuvoje [The war in Lithuania], in: Lietuvos ūkininkas 22, 1 July 1915, p. 198. [↑](#)
31. Cf. eg. Karas Lietuvoje [The war in Lithuania], in: Lietuvos ūkininkas 20, 17 June 1915, p. 180. [↑](#)
32. Civilians were told to climb rooftops in the case of gas attacks, to take valerian in the case of the breathing in of poison gas. Further pieces of advice included drinking black coffee, strong tea or liquor. Žinotina arčiau pozicijų gyvenantiems [What one needs to know near inhabited areas], in: Lietuvos ūkininkas 21, 24 June 1915, pp. 191-192. [↑](#)
33. Šiauliai experienced particularly heavy bombing and artillery fire, while Tauragė, which was taken and lost by the German Army three times, was almost totally burnt down and abandoned. Pečiulis, Marius: Pirmojo pasaulinio karo veiksmai vakarų Lietuvoje – Vokietijos ir Rusijos pasienyje – 1915 m. pradžioje [The course of the First World War in western Lithuania – the Russo-German border – early 1915], in: Karo archyvas 26 (2011), pp. 44-80, here pp. 63-65, 70-73, 78. For the case of the towns along the German-Russian border cf. Leiserowitz, Ruth: Sabbatleuchter und Kriegerverein: Juden in der ostpreussisch-litauischen Grenzregion 1812 – 1942, Osnabrück 2010, p. 278. [↑](#)
34. For the cases of Prienai and Kalvarija (both Suwałki governorate) cf. Lietuvos ūkininkas 26, 29 July 1915, p. 235; LVIA f. 496, ap. 1, b. 27, l. 22-24. [↑](#)

35. Mitrulevičius, Socialdemokratai [Social Democrats] 2009, p. 126; Weeks, Vilnius 2008, p. 40; Pikčilingis, Pergyventos valandos [Survived hours] 1926, p. 98. ↑
36. Pečiulis, Pirmojo pasaulinio karo veiksmi [Course of the First World War] 2011, p. 61; Gatrell, Peter: A whole empire walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I, Bloomington 1999, pp. 16-23; Klier, John: Russians, Jews, and the pogroms of 1881-1882, Cambridge 2011; Schuster, Zwsichen allen Fronten 2004, pp. 164-168. ↑
37. KAA f. I-59, ap. 1, b. 56. ↑
38. Cf. for the cases of the towns Šiauliai, Tauragė and Jurbarkas: Pečiulis, Pirmojo pasaulinio karo veiksmi [Course of the First World War] 2011, p. 73; Strazhas, Deutsche Ostpolitik 1993, p. 15; Lietuvos ūkininkas 21, 24 July 1915, p. 190. ↑
39. Lietuvos ūkininkas 21, 24 July 1915, p. 190; Pikčilingis, Pergyventos valandos [Survived hours] 1926 pp. 94, 118. ↑
40. Soldiers of these units, however, were not exclusively Latvians. A significant number was also recruited in Kovno district. KAA f. I-59, ap. 1, b. 56, l. 5-6, 15-16, 25, 37. ↑
41. 9,000 soldiers – more than one third of the riflemen – fell during the “Christmas Battles” (December 1916 – January 1917), making them known far beyond the region. Berziņš, Valdis: Latviešu strēlnieki. Drāma un tragēdija [The Latvian Riflemen. Drama and Tragedy], Riga 1995; Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 86. ↑
42. Raun, Estonia 1971, p. 101. ↑
43. Jussila, Osmo: From grand duchy to modern state. A political history of Finland since 1809, London 1999, p. 91. ↑
44. E.g. the future White Guard generals Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim (1867-1951), Ernst Löfström (1865-1937) and Wilhelm Thesleff (1880-1941). Upton states that the most common reason for young Finnish men to join the Army voluntarily was a lust for adventure. Upton, Finnish Revolution 1981, p. 15. ↑
45. Liulevicius, Vejas Gabriel: Kriegsland im Osten: Eroberung, Kolonialisierung und Militärherrschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg, Hamburg 2002, p. 19. ↑
46. Moreover, Riga’s port was closed and the bay mined, which effectively paralyzed the economy. Hatlie, Riga 2009, pp. 16-19. ↑
47. Rauch, Baltic States 1987, p. 26. ↑
48. Upton, Finnish Revolution 1981, pp. 16ff. ↑
49. Gatrell, Peter: A whole empire walking 1999. ↑
50. Liulevicius, Kriegsland 2002, p. 19. ↑
51. Tiepolato, Serena: “...und nun waren wir auch Verbannte. Warum? Weshalb?": Deportate prussiane in Russia 1914-1918, in: Deportate, esuli, profughe. Rivista telematica di studi sulla memoria femminile 1 (2004), pp. 59-85. ↑
52. Lietuvos ūkininkas, 3 July 1915, p. 162. ↑
53. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, pp. 76ff. ↑

54. Leiserowitz, Sabbatleuchter 2010, p. 271. [↑](#)
55. For the cases of Mažeikiai and Kaunas cf. Lietuvos ūkininkas 21, 24 July 1915, pp. 189-190; Pikčilingis, Pergyventas valandos [Survived hours] 1926, pp. 94-95. For the case of Germans in Kovno governorate cf. KAA f. I-50, ap. 2, b. 481, l. 1, 14-31. [↑](#)
56. Pečiulis, Pirmojo pasaulinio karo veiksmi [Course of the First World War] 2011, p. 73; Weeks, Vilnius 2009, p. 39. [↑](#)
57. Rauch, Baltic States 1987, p. 25; Liulevicius, Kriegsländ 2002, p. 19f. [↑](#)
58. For the cases of Ligumai and Pasvalys cf. Lietuvos ūkininkas 24, 15 July 1915, p. 212; 24 June 1915, p. 188. [↑](#)
59. For the case of Kaunas cf. Pikčilingis, Pergyventas valandos [Survived hours] 1926, p. 104. [↑](#)
60. Bauer, Henning et al.: Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897, volume B, Stuttgart 1991, pp. 69-76, 156, 197; Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 37; Bogojavlenska, Svetlana: Die jüdische Gesellschaft in Courland und Riga 1795-1915, Paderborn 2012, p. 18; Kasekamp, Andres: A History of the Baltic States, London 2010, p. 117. [↑](#)
61. Kasekamp, History 2010, p. 114; Netesin, Yu. N.: Evakuacija promyšlennosti Latvii v pervoy mirovoy voyny 1915-1917 gg. [Evacuation of the Latvian industry in the First World War 1915-1917], Riga 1962, pp. 27-76, cit. op. Hatlie, Riga 2009, p. 18. [↑](#)
62. Bräunlich, P.: Kurländischer Frühling. Persönliche Eindrücke, Berlin 1917, p. 27; Priedite, Latvian Refugees 2004, p. 37. [↑](#)
63. For the case of Dvinsk cf. Lietuvos ūkininkas 24, 15 July 1915, pp. 215ff. [↑](#)
64. This applied, for example, to Latvians in inner Russia, who – being Lutherans – were treated as Germans, i.e. as the enemy. Priedite, Latvian Refugees 2004, p. 43, 45-46. For the Lithuanian case cf. Tomas Balkelis: The Return of World War I Refugees to Lithuania, 1918-1924, in: Gatrell/Baron, Homelands 2004, pp. 74-97, here pp. 94-96. [↑](#)
65. On 27 August 1915, Ludendorff wrote to foreign-office official Arthur Zimmermann, that he intended “to establish for myself another Kingdom in Courland and Lithuania”. Sukiennicki, Wiktor: East Central Europe during World War I. Boulder 1984, p. 100. [↑](#)
66. Page, Formation 1970, p. 28. [↑](#)
67. Earlier, the Lithuanian-language Ober-Ost press organ “Dabartis” had emphasized the Lithuanian character of Vilnius on many occasions. Cf. e.g. Dabartis 4, 11 September 1915, p. 2; Dabartis 7, 22 September 1915, p. 1. [↑](#)
68. Pikčilingis, Pergyventas valandos [Survived hours] 1926, p. 110. [↑](#)
69. Westerhoff, Christian: Zwangsarbeit im Ersten Weltkrieg. Deutsche Arbeitskräftepolitik im besetzten Polen und Litauen 1914-1918, Paderborn 2012, p. 179. [↑](#)
70. Strazhas, Deutsche Ostpolitik 1993, pp. 28ff., p. 78. [↑](#)
71. Wilhelm II, German Emperor (1859-1941) however, never interfered in Ober Ost affairs.

- Liulevicius, *Kriegsland* 2002, p. 21; Strazhas, *Deutsche Ostpolitik* 1993, p. 244; Westerhoff, *Zwangsarbeit* 2012, p. 74. ↑
72. Raun, *Estonia* 1971, pp. 106-107. ↑
73. Koenen, Gerd: *Der Russland-Komplex: Die Deutschen und der Osten, 1900-1945*, Munich 2005, p. 73. ↑
74. Among these were Arnold Zweig (1887-1968), Richard Dehmel (1863-1920), Herbert Eulenberg (1847-1949), Victor Klemperer (1881-1960), Hermann Struck (1876-1944), Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884-1976) and Magnus Zeller (1888-1972). Klees, Michael: *Begegnungen mit dem Osten. Kulturelle Erfahrungen in der Kownoer Etappe*, in: Tauber, *Weltkrieg* 2009, pp. 137-152, here pp. 141-144; Koenen, *Russland-Komplex*, p. 73. ↑
75. Urbelis, A.: *Vokiečių okupacijos laikai* [The times of German occupation], in: Karo archyvas 3 (1926), pp. 112-127, here pp. 112ff. ↑
76. Pikčilingis, *Pergyventas valandos* [Survived hours] 1926, p. 103. ↑
77. This was mostly a result of the destruction of supply infrastructure due to the expulsion of Jews. In Kaunas, for instance, Lithuania's second largest city, only two or three bakeries were functioning when the German Army entered the city. Moreover, with the Tillmanns and Schmidt plants, Kaunas' by far largest factories had been largely deconstructed. Pikčilingis, *Pergyventas valandos* [Survived hours] 1926, pp. 101, 103. ↑
78. Pikčilingis, *Pergyventas valandos* [Survived hours] 1926, p. 102; *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 31, 13 August 1914, pp. 294-295. ↑
79. Janßen, Karl-Heinz: *Die baltische Okkupationspolitik des Deutschen Reiches*, in: Hehn, Jürgen von et al. (eds.): *Von den Baltischen Provinzen zu den Baltischen Staaten. Beiträge zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Republiken Estland und Lettland 1917-1918*, Marburg 1971, pp. 217-254, here p. 242; Weeks, *Vilnius* 2009, p. 46. ↑
80. Already existing associations, however, were allowed to keep functioning. Pikčilingis, *Pergyventas valandos* [Survived hours] 1926, p. 105. ↑
81. Urbelis, *Vokiečių okupacijos laikai* [The times of German occupation] 1926, p. 116. ↑
82. Strazhas, *Deutsche Ostpolitik* 1993, p. 31f. ↑
83. This was further aggravated by the decision of the German authorities on 24 July 1917 to not accept Russian roubles. Weeks, *Vilnius* 2009, p. 46. ↑
84. Strazhas, *Deutsche Ostpolitik* 1993, pp. 27, 31, 48f. ↑
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-21, 37. ↑
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33. ↑
87. Westerhoff, *Zwangsarbeit* 2012, pp. 221ff., 310. ↑
88. Urbelis, *Vokiečių okupacijos laikai* [The times of German occupation] 1926, pp. 122ff. ↑
89. Strazhas, *Deutsche Ostpolitik* 1993, p. 39. ↑
90. Westerhoff, *Zwangsarbeit* 2012, pp. 310, 321. ↑

91. Janßen, Baltische Okkupationspolitik 1971, p. 22; Sukiennicki, East Central Europe 1984, p. 138. [↑](#)
92. The share of Baltic Germans in the whole population had increased from 6.5 percent to 20 percent. The colonization of Courland and forceful eviction of the remaining Latvians into Russia were even propagated by influential German historian Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954). Conservative historian Hans Delbrück (1848-1929) also included northern Lithuania in the territory to be annexed. Janßen, Baltische Okkupationspolitik 1971, p. 227; Weiss, Baltische Frage 1917, p. 9; Wittram, Reinhard: Die Baltische Frage als Problem der Russischen Provisorischen Regierung, in: Hehn et al., Baltische Provinzen 1971, pp. 69-97, here p. 69. [↑](#)
93. Sukiennicki, East Central Europe 1984, pp. 144-146. [↑](#)
94. Klees, Begegnungen 2009, p. 149. [↑](#)
95. Janßen, Baltische Okkupationspolitik 1971, p. 227. [↑](#)
96. Grimm, Claus: Vor den Toren Europas: Geschichte der Baltischen Landeswehr, 1918-1920. Hamburg 1963, p. 16. [↑](#)
97. Sammartino, Annemarie H.: The Impossible Border. Germany and the East, 1914-1922, Ithaca 2010, p. 47; Schulze, Hagen: Der Oststaat-Plan, in: Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte 18/2 (1970), pp. 123-163, here pp. 129ff. [↑](#)
98. Liulevicius, Vejas Gabriel: Von 'Ober-Ost' nach 'Ostland'?, in: Groß, Gerhard P.: Die vergessene Front. Der Osten 1914/15. Ereignis, Wirkung, Nachwirkung, Paderborn 2006, pp. 295-310. [↑](#)
99. Janßen, Baltische Okkupationspolitik 1971, p. 230. [↑](#)
100. Wittram, Baltische Frage 1971, p. 75. [↑](#)
101. Rauch, Baltic States 1987, p. 100. [↑](#)
102. Wittram, Baltische Frage 1971, p. 46. [↑](#)
103. Cf. e.g. Zloch, Stephanie: Polnischer Nationalismus: Politik und Gesellschaft zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen, Cologne 2010, pp. 182-185; also, Schweiger, Alexandra: Polens Zukunft liegt im Osten. Polnische Ostkonzepte der späten Teilungszeit, Marburg 2014; Buchowski, Krzysztof: Litwomani i polonizatorzy: Mity, wzajemne postrzeganie i stereotypy w stosunkach polsko-litewskich w pierwszy polowie XX wieku [Litvomanics and Polishers. Myths, mutual perception and stereotypes in the Polish-Lithuanian relations in the first half of the 20th century], Białystok 1996. [↑](#)
104. Raun, Estonia 1971, p. 99. [↑](#)
105. Upton, Finnish Revolution 1981, pp. 231-515; Arosalo, Sirkka: Social conditions for political violence. Red and white terror in the Finnish Civil War of 1918, in: Journal of Peace Research 35 (1998), 2, pp. 147-166; Loima, Jyrki: Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing? The Fate of Russian "Aliens and Enemies" in the Finnish Civil War in 1918, in: The Historian 69 (2007), 2, pp. 254-274. [↑](#)



106. Raun, Estonia 1971, p. 99. [↑](#)
107. Priedite, Latvian Refugees 2004, p. 39. [↑](#)
108. However, Latvian demands for a unification of southern Livonia, Courland and Latgale (then part of Vitebsk governorate) were not granted. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 88. [↑](#)
109. Ganz, A. H.: The German Expedition to Finland, 1918, in: Military Affairs, 44/2 (1980), pp. 84-91. [↑](#)
110. Kommunisticheskaya partiya Latvii v Oktyabrskoy revolyutsii 1917. Dokumenty i material [The Latvian Communist Party in the October Revolution 1917. Documents and material], Riga 1963. [↑](#)
111. The efficiency of the Latvian Riflemen has been attributed to its linguistic and cultural isolation in Russia after the occupation of whole Latvia by German troops in February 1918, thus ensuring it would stay immune against demoralization efforts from outside. Mawdsley, Evan: The Russian Civil War, New York 2005, p. 41. [↑](#)
112. Minnik, Teufelskreis 2011, pp. 125-126. [↑](#)
113. Demm, Eberhard: Anschluss, Autonomie oder Unabhängigkeit? Die deutsche Litauenpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg und das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker, in: Journal of Baltic Studies, 25/2 (1996), pp. 195-200. [↑](#)
114. The Lithuanian Council elected William Charles of Urach king on 4 June 1918, but the German government did not recognize the election. The Finnish parliament elected Frederick Charles of Hesse (1868-1940) King on 9 October 1918. [↑](#)
115. Sullivan, Charles L.: German Freecorps in the Baltic, 1918-1919, in: Journal of Baltic Studies 7/2 (1976), pp. 124-133. [↑](#)
116. Akunov, Volfgang: Fraykory. Povest' o germanskikh dobrovol'tsakh [Freikorps. The story of the German volunteers], Moscow 2004; Sammartino, Impossible Border 2010, p. 44; von der Goltz, Rüdiger, Meine Sendung in Finnland und im Baltikum, Leipzig 1920, p. 156. [↑](#)
117. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 94. [↑](#)
118. Raun, Estonia 1971, p. 108. [↑](#)
119. Initially, the Estonian government had prohibited the enlistment of Baltic Germans into the Estonian Army. Pajur, Ago: Der Ausbruch des Landeswehrkrieges. Die estnische Perspektive, in: Forschungen zur Baltischen Geschichte 4 (2009), pp. 145-169, here pp. 156ff. [↑](#)
120. Brüggemann, Karsten: Die Gründung der Republik Estland und das Ende des "Einen und unteilbaren Russland": Die Petrograder Front des russischen Bürgerkriegs 1918-1920, Wiesbaden 2002, p. 197. [↑](#)
121. Bullock, David: The Russian Civil War 1918-21, Oxford 2008, p. 96. [↑](#)
122. Brüggemann, Karsten: "Foreign Rule" during the Estonian War of Independence 1918-1920: The Bolshevik Experiment and the "Estonian Worker's Commune", in:

- Journal of Baltic Studies, 37/2 (2006), pp. 210-226. ↑
123. Kipel, Vitaūt / Kipel, Zora: Byelorussian Statehood. Reader and Bibliography, Minsk 1988, p. 188. ↑
  124. Rauch, Baltic States 1987, p. 69. ↑
  125. Bermond-Avalov himself stated he commanded over 55,000 men, 40,000 of which were German nationals. This total figure was most likely exaggerated. Sammartino, Impossible Border 2010, p. 66. ↑
  126. This has been referred to as a “fratricidal war” by Pečiulis, Marius: Pirmojo pasaulinio karo veiksmi Lietuvos teritorijoje 1915 m. rugpjūčio pabaigoje – rugsėjo mėnesį [The course of the First World War on Lithuanian territory from the end of August 1915 to September], in: Karo archyvas 25 (2010), pp. 29-97, here p. 29. ↑
  127. Leiserowitz, Sabbatleuchter 2010. ↑
  128. For example, in May 1919, the Estonian Army numbered 74,500 soldiers, 2,750 of which were Russian, 1,500 Latvian, 300 Ingrian, and 300 Finnish, Swedish and Danish. The Latvian Army of the Ulmanis government included not only Latvians, but also Baltic Germans and Estonians. The White Armies of Yudenich and Bermond-Avalov included soldiers of all ethnic origins – however, in the latter case, mostly Germans. The “Baltische Landeswehr” was planned to include eighteen Latvian, seven German and one Russian company. Bleiere, Latvia 2006, p. 130; Lokk 2008 #637; Raun, Estonia 1971, p. 108. ↑
  129. Rauch, Baltic States 1987, p. 53. ↑
  130. Estonian State Archive (=ERA), f. 825, op. 1, d. 2, l. 70. ↑
  131. Aviel Roshwald attributes the fact that the Riflemen, in spite of its ethnic/national character, did not become a “nationalist vanguard”, to the level of industrialization and commercialization of agriculture, which in Latvia was higher than anywhere else in the Russian Empire. Roshwald, Aviel; Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East, 1914-1923. London 2001, p. 103. ↑
  132. Raun, Estonia 1971, p. 108. ↑
  133. A public announcement by Bermond-Avalov, published in 1919 in Jelgava, which demanded loyalty without promising any economic benefits, gives a clear impression of how little the West-Russian Volunteer Army could offer to Latvian peasants. Publication “An die Bevölkerung”, Mitau, November 1919, exhibit of the Karas muziejs in Riga. ↑
  134. Pajur, Ausbruch 2009, p. 146. ↑
  135. Ago Pajur claims that the hostile attitude of Johan Laidoner was instead the trigger for the escalation of the Estonian/Latvian – German crisis, and the outbreak of the Battle of Cēsis. The intentions of the Landeswehr, Pajur says, were very unclear. Pajur, Ausbruch 2009, pp. 153ff. ↑
  136. For example, Vilnius was ceded to Lithuania by the Bolsheviks but only handed over

after the Battle of Warsaw and the ensuing retreat of the Red Army. [↑](#)

137. Pajur, Ausbruch 2009, pp. 162ff. [↑](#)
138. Jēkabsons, Ēriks: Lietuvos kariuomenė Ilūkstės apskrityje 1919-1920 metais [The Lithuanian Army in Ilūkstė district], in: Karo archyvas 21 (2006), pp. 41-68, here pp. 60ff. [↑](#)
139. Rauch, Baltic States 1987, p. 59. [↑](#)
140. Gerwarth, Robert/Horne, John: Vectors of Violence: Paramilitarism in Europe after the Great War, 1917-1923, in: Journal of Modern History 83/3 (2011), pp. 489-512, here pp. 501-504. [↑](#)
141. After taking Riga, 3,000 inhabitants were killed. Freikorps members also shot 200 Latvians in Tukums, 500 in Mitau, mostly legitimizing the killings by the alleged collaboration of the victims with the Bolsheviks. Liulevicius, Kriegsland 2002, pp. 236f., 243f; Sammartino, Impossible Border 2010, pp. 46, 57. [↑](#)
142. Liulevicius, Kriegsland 2002, pp. 242f. [↑](#)
143. The Estonian Omakaitse ("Home Guard") paramilitary unit, which in November 1918 was integrated into the paramilitary Kaitseliit ("Defense Force"), and the Latvian Aizsargi ("Guards"), which was established in March 1919, were created from the example of the Finnish Suojeluskunta ("Guards"), which had been formed during the Finnish Civil War. [↑](#)
144. The Lithuanian Šiaulių Sąjunga ("Riflemen Association") was established later in June 1919 as a direct reaction towards the attack of Freikorps against Lithuanian soldiers in Šiauliai. Jurevičiūtė 1998 #156: 63 [↑](#)
145. Minnik, Teufelskreis 2011, pp. 133, 136, 138. [↑](#)
146. Golczewski, Frank: Polnisch-jüdische Beziehungen 1881-1922. Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Osteuropa, Wiesbaden 1981; Schuster, Zwischen allen Fronten 2004, pp. 447ff. [↑](#)
147. LCVA f. 648, ap. 1, b. 61, l. 44, 54-55; b. 89, l. 16-17; ap. 8, b. 16, l. 8-13. [↑](#)
148. Smetona was head of the Lithuanian Council and the first president of Lithuania, Ulmanis headed the Latvian provisional government, and Pāts led the Estonian Salvation Committee (Päästekomitee), which elected the provisional government, which was also headed by Pāts. [↑](#)
149. This was met with fierce resistance by representatives of the White Movement at the Peace Conference. Kirby, D. G.: Finland in the twentieth century, London 1979, pp. 58ff. [↑](#)
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## Citation

Klaus Richter: Baltic States and Finland, in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer D. Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.10002](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10002)

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### Author Keywords

Estonia; Finland; Latvia; Lithuania; Baltics; First World War

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[Baltikum ; Weltkrieg \[1914-1918\]](#)

### LC Subject Headings

[World War, 1914-1918 ; Baltic States](#)

### Rameau Subject Headings

[Guerre mondiale \(1914-1918\) ; Pays baltes](#)

### Key Person(s)

[Niedra, Andrievs](#); [Kerenskii, Aleksandr Fedorovich](#); [Goßler, Alfred von](#); [Isenburg-Birstein, Franz-Joseph von](#); [Heppe, Theodor von](#); [Sering, Max](#); [Winnig, August](#); [Goltz, Rüdiger Graf von der](#); [Miřiuřkov, Pavel Nikolaevich](#); [Vācietis, Jukums](#); [Bethmann Hollweg, Theobald von](#); [Ludendorff, Erich](#); [Hindenburg, Paul von](#); [Maximilian, Prince of Baden](#); [Yudenich, Nikolai Nikolaevich](#); [Ulmanis, Kārlis](#); [Pāts, Konstantin](#); [Smetona, Antanas](#)

### Key Location(s)

[Kaunas](#); [Kovno](#); [Helsinki](#); [Augustów](#); [Liepaja](#); [Memel \(Klaipėda\)](#); [Libau](#); [Riga](#); [Tallinn \(Reval\)](#); [Jelgava](#); [Tartu \(Dorpat\)](#); [Petrograd \(Saint Petersburg\)](#); [Vilnius \(Wilna\)](#); [Dvinsk \(Daugavpils\)](#); [Siauliai](#); [Suwalki](#); [Taurage](#); [Tilsit](#)

### Title

Baltic States and Finland

### Author(s)

[Klaus Richter](#)

### Article Type

Handbook Article

### Classification Group

Survey Article (Regional)

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